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Evan. T. Jones (ed.), 'The Quinn papers: transcripts of correspondence relating to the Bristol discovery voyages to North America in the fifteenth century', 'David B. Quinn Papers', Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2009)¹

The following document contains extracts of correspondence deposited by Prof David Beers Quinn (d. 2002) in the Library of Congress. The extracts all relate to, or throw light on, the research by Prof Quinn (formerly of Liverpool University), Dr Alwyn Ruddock (formerly of Birkbeck College, University of London) and Miss Margaret Condon (formerly of The Public Record Office, London). The extracts have been selected because all illuminate the research of these scholars on the Bristol discovery voyages to the North America in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century. The sections that refer to Dr Ruddock's research have been reproduced here to assist researchers seeking to relocate the documents that Ruddock found. For more information on the background to this research, see: [Evan T. Jones, 'Alwyn Ruddock: "John Cabot and the Discovery of America"', *Historical Research*, 81, \(May, 2008\), 224-254](#). Those sections of the letters that concern Margaret Condon's finds have been reproduced here to provide additional background context for an article on 'Henry VII and the Bristol expeditions to North America: the Condon documents' (provisional title, forthcoming).

The extracts are listed in chronological order. The transcriptions follow the spelling, punctuation and line breaks of the original. Errors made by the letter writers are marked [sic], to distinguish them from any errors the transcriber may have made. The letters were all typed, unless otherwise indicated.

27 November 1966

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 164 Folder 7

Elizabeth Ralph, Bristol Archives Office to D.B. Quinn

'Dr. Ruddock was here this week and from what she was doing I wonder whether you should discuss the Cabot material with her. I have always made it a rule not to discuss with students other student's work!'

1 February 1967

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 164 Folder 7

D.B. Quinn to Ralph

'Dr Ruddock has told me a little about her plans.² She is, in fact, writing up the few merchants I have been following desultorily in the Tolsey Books so I leave this to her. As I have already had my own say on a number of others she is writing up in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography I was merely try [sic] to put something together on the ones who though linked to Cabot were not known to have been in America. She has found something new on the background of the Mathew and its financing and this has inspired her to rewrite the whole story of the Cabots and the Bristol merchants. As this will be done from the economic history angle it should be most valuable. The fact that she is well under way makes it all the more necessary to get the TLS letter out, as if a reply comes in it may be of use to her as well.³ She tells me that she has no new Bristol documents on Cabot and so would have nothing to contribute to the volume so her discoveries were, presumably, made in London. She is speaking to the Royal Geographical Society quite soon so we shall know more of what they amount to. One reason I delayed writing to you is that I wished to have some idea of what Miss Ruddock was doing first.'

¹ 'David B. Quinn Papers', Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [hereafter 'LoC Quinn Papers']: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms004012>. I would like to thank Dr Jeff Reed (Washington, D.C.) for his great efforts in going through the papers and also for sending me photocopies of the items transcribed here.

² Quinn's letter of 4 April 1992 (see below) suggests that Ruddock had told him about her discoveries by 1965.

³ Quinn published the *Times Literary Supplement* article referred to here on 8 June 1967, p. 517. The article is an appeal to find the extracts from Maurice Toby's 1565 chronicle of Bristol, which had been sold by a Bristol bookseller some years earlier: George's, *Catalogue*, no. 499 (1953), Item 632.

10 February 1967

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 23 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

This letter concerns her upcoming talk to the Royal Geographical Society.

'Many thanks for your letter. I am sorry I have not replied earlier. I have been dreadfully busy the past three weeks preparing a lec. I gave last Monday to the R.G.S. on the Bristol voyages in 15th. C.⁴ An almighty snag developed over one of the charts I was using as a key bit of evidence. I had to get photos over from Milan and get a friend in the University there to examine the original with the director of the Ambrosiana before we could clear up the snag satisfactorily. I was working on it to the very last minute, so put off replying to your letter until it was over.⁵

'The documents I've got on Cabot do alter our picture of everything rather radically, as well as dating the first voyage and revealing his efforts to raise the money to finance it.⁶ They also alter the accepted picture of the Matthew's voyage in 1497 and events following its return to Bristol. But they do not concern Sebastian in Bristol at all. It would be better to hold back the Matthew, since you ask, and go ahead on Sebastian. It will not hold you up for long, as I am hoping to get this out by Christmas. The publishers are ready to go ahead the minute I complete the typescript. Maddeningly, Birkbeck affairs are taking up a fantastic amount of time just now. If I could get just three months sabbatical I could get a couple of volumes finished, one for Southampton too...'

'I'm afraid this sounds just one big moan, but after next week I ought to be able to get back to the final two chapters to be polished up and checked. The R.G.S. lecture was very useful. A chap in the Met. Office has just sent me details of weather conditions in the 15th century which will be no end useful in supporting my ideas on how the first Bristol men got to America.⁷ He was there last Monday and was delighted to find someone whose work from another angle exactly fitted in with his work on climate and weather. I have rather ignored that aspect up to now.'

4 March 1967

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 23 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

'Many thanks for your letter.

I'm sorry, but I haven't the slightest idea where the extracts from the Toby Chronicle may be today. Is there no record at all of the sale among the ledgers of George's?'

'My R.G.S. paper will not appear till

⁴ Royal Geographical Society.

⁵ The Biblioteca Ambrosiana is a historic library in Milan, established in the sixteenth century.

⁶ It is known that Cabot led a voyage from Bristol in 1496 but the precise date of this is unknown: L.A. Vigneras, 'The Cape Breton landfall: 1494 or 1497. Note on a letter from John Day', *Canadian Historical Review*, 38 (1957), p. 228.

⁷ Ruddock's idea was that freak weather conditions could have blown ships sailing up to Iceland across to America: A.A. Ruddock, 'John Day of Bristol and the English voyages across the Atlantic before 1497', *Geographical Journal*, 132 (1966), 231.

September. There is very little about John Cabot in it. I concentrated on the island of Brazil and the early Bristol voyages and shipping. It is one chapter of the Cabot book, and I was glad to have the opportunity to try it out on the cartographers at the R.G.S. before getting into print.'

'I shall look out for your letter in the TLS. and hope the Bristol notes turn up somewhere. Miss Ralph has another chronicle at Bristol much fuller than Ricart's Calendar, dating from the early 17th. century, I believe, but incorporating earlier Bristol material. Have you seen it? The author was William Addames, but he uses national chronicles as well as Bristol materials and it is rather a hotch-potch.'⁸

20 December 1968

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 25 Folder 8
Ruddock to D.B. Quinn (handwritten)

"Dear David,

I really am the most shocking correspondent. I received your pamphlet on Sebastian Cabot over a month ago, & I fear I have not written yet to thank you for it. I'm so sorry. Let me hasten to do so now & invoke the Christmas Spirit to turn away your wrath at my long delay. I read & re-read it with pleasure & ordered another copy for Birkbeck Library. It is exactly what I needed to follow up Williamson for my 'Special' students. All the Spanish side of Sebastian's activities do not seem to have been translated into English anywhere easily accessible so far. It is so useful to have it done now.

My work on Cabot & the Bristol men was temporarily held up. I got on to some more new stuff this year but had to wait till September before I could get out to Milan to deal with it. But I believe I've all the new material tied up now. Altogether it makes quite a nice sized book & I will be going to press about Easter. The Bristol account of the Trinity voyage to Spain is in page proof. I'll send you a copy as soon as it appears.'

⁸ Quinn's *TLS* article also makes the first published reference to an entry in the Addames chronicle to the *Matthew* of Bristol. This suggests that Quinn followed up Ruddock's suggestion.

13 March 1976

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 34 Folder 9

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn.

'You put me in a difficult spot by asking that I should supply English translations of the new documents I have found for the next book of documents you are publishing in America. Naturally, I am very willing to see you make use of the two short documents I have already printed in the Bulletin But I should prefer to publish the rest first myself. The most important ones come from Italian sources. I have spent most of my Easter vacations and Septembers in the last ten years digging in various archives and libraries up and down Italy and I am sure you will understand when I say I want them to appear as new evidence first in my Cabot book rather than in translation only in another American collection. This would have been in the press before now, if I had not been held up yet again last September in Italy in finishing my last checks. I know you must be irritated, like many other people, by my slowness in finishing this volume, but I have had no sabbatical years, as you have had, and no money for research assistants or foreign travel and work abroad. All my work in Italy and elsewhere has had to be done at my own expense in the vacations each year so it is no wonder I have taken so long over the subject.

You may be sure I shall get this book into print as soon as possible now and I hope it will appear in good time for you to use the translations I provide in the appendices. But I feel sure you will understand my point of view when I say I want it to be quite new. I have been held up by so many things while working on it, as you know, but I do believe it will be all plain sailing now.'

28 September 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Margaret Condon (PRO) to D.B. Quinn

'I have finally sorted and listed a box of Exchequer, K.R. Miscellanea, E 163, and can now give the 'Pirate's log' a proper reference, to wit, E 163/28/12. Thank you for your comments on the document.

You may well know the following reference to exploration in the New World, taken from a declared account for Butlerage 16-20 Henry VII, E 351/454, although it was new to me. It reads

[Brist]oll In denar' per Hugonem Eliott et Robertum Poppeham
firmar' prisagij vinorum Regis ibidem solut ut pro dono
sive Regardo domini Regis concess' in sustentacionem et
supportacionem onerum dict' Hugonis et aliarum personarum
Navigenc' in ij bus Nav' versus Insulam de novo Invent'
etc. per warraunt' domini Regis C li.

30 October 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Condon to D.B. Quinn (handwritten)

Reiterates information in letter of 28 September. In particular that:

'Second, I recently found (tho' I must have seen the reference years ago, without attaching much importance to it) a reference to a reward paid by Hugh Eliott & Robert Popham, butlers at Bristol, of £100 by warrant of the King to Hugh "et aliarum personarum navigence' in ii bus Navi' versus Insuarum de novo Invent etc." The reference is E 351/454 – I did transcribe the entry more fully in my earlier letter, so do not reproduce it here.'

30 October 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

'Many thanks also for the reference to Hugh Eliot from the P.R.O. My book on the Cabots is still unfinished so I shall be glad to use it with due acknowledgements.

Retirement began very happily for us with the discovery of a pleasant little house near the edge of Midhurst Common and the prospect of publication by OUP of a much cut-down version of my first draft of the Cabot book. But while still rewriting I was obliged to put it aside once more for personal reasons. Vernon died at the end of this summer and is buried here, so I feel anchored to Midhurst now. With an empty house, unlimited leisure and a long winter to fill up ahead, I am taking up the Cabots again, for the last time, I hope.

However, I have decided it is useless to go back to OUP in view of stories I have heard of recent troubles there. Moreover, I was not very happy in the straitjacket their editor place around me. I am thinking about approaching Macmillans to see if they might be interested and if so what length it might take. In the present state of publishing it seems futile to write without some such guidance first. Otherwise I suppose I must try an American publisher, but I should prefer to see it through here. Anyway, this will be the final rewriting, quite, quite definitely.'

3 November 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

D.B. Quinn to Condon

'A chapter of accidents has prevented me from acknowledging the very valuable information on the grant of £100 to Hugh Elliott and others sometime between 1500 and 1504.'

Makes various suggestions about the letter, noting:

'it is very valuable

in adding to our knowledge that Henry VII continued to support the ventures of 1501-1505 on which evidence had already begun to accumulate (see my New American World, I (1979) which I hope your office library has managed to buy). I took the liberty of sending the reference to Dr A.A.Ruddock who is still struggling to get her Cabots book into shape (her husband's death will have set her back again): she will find it of direct value. If you like however, I will draft a note in context which you might care to print in MM with just an acknowledgement to me.⁹ The information should certainly be put on record quickly.

The documents on Sebastian Cabot on the years 1507-9 which I print in NAW, I, do suggest that he obtained [sic] help from Henry VII on consideration of surrendering his pension after 1508 (or that is a possible reading). Nowhere has any evidence turned up on this. Dr Ruddock has I'm sure combed most places (neither of us thought of the Buterlage account however) and so if the answer is to be found it may be among the documents of 1507-9 in the misceallanea [sic] which you are sorting. Their discovery would be a major triumph.'

⁹ *Mariner's Mirror*.

6 November 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Margaret Condon (PRO) to D.B. Quinn

'Than you for your letter of 3 November.

First, the dating of the payment to Eliott. The evidence is necessarily circumstantial, since we do not possess all the relevant documents. But a reasonable case can be made to date the payment to the two years ending Michaelmas 18 Henry VII (1502) rather than 20 Henry VII (1504). We do have a declaration for 18-20 Henry VII in E101/84/18 (not obvious from the list, which is incorrect in its dating of the file). Using both the 18-20 account, and the declaration for 16-20 Henry VII, E351/454, once can begin to work out the 'discharge' for 16-18 Henry VII.

From E351/454 we know that the charge on the accountants after initial deductions was £387 6s. 0.

	£	s.	d.
Of this, allowed for a grant to David Vaughan	8.	0.	0
Paid into the chamber November 1501	218.	12.	0
Paid into the chamber December 1502	14.	16.	4
	<u>241.</u>	<u>8.</u>	<u>4</u>

This leaves £145. 17. 8.	£.	s.	d.
--------------------------	----	----	----

But from E101/84/18 - the arrears at Michaelmas 18 Henry VII			
- were	28.	11.	0
Only two years of Eliott's annuity were paid - 18-20 Henry VIII, whereas E351/454 shows a total of £40, therefore to his annuity	13.	6.	8
	<u>41.</u>	<u>17.</u>	<u>8</u>

E351/454 also gives a charge of £4 for wine for the King's household - October 18 Henry VII. This does not appear in E101/84/18 and it is not uncommon to find a charge slightly after the end of the financial year. Therefore add to payments	4.	0.	0
	<u>45.</u>	<u>17.</u>	<u>8</u>

This leaves an unexplained £100, which, as is clear from E351/454, was not going into the Exchequer. This must, therefore, be our reward.'

'I did check through the abstract of warrants for issue in E403/2558, just in case there was a 'pro' tally levied on a warrant for the reward; but was not surprised to draw a blank. The series of receipt rolls themselves is very defective for this period: but I would regard the absence of a warrant as pretty conclusive.

If my theory is correct, the logic points to the payment being made on the account of Michaelmas 1501-1502. There is a marked contrast between liveries to the chamber in the two years. The arrears belong to 1501-1502 (E101/84/10); the account for 1500-1501 rested 'Quietus'.

18 November 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

D.B. Quinn to Condon

'Your meticulous working out of the assignment in the butlerage account

was most impressive and I think the proof that the assignment belonged to the years Mich.1500 -Mich. 1502 rather than to the following unimpeachable.'

'I think it would be a good idea to put the butlerage item in print as it may suggest further associations. It would probably be best for me to draft a context for you, as far as it is possible to do so, and for you then to incorporate the new material, which also include the E403/2558 item.'

'However, if you agree this is the right way to approach the matter I will try to draft something for you. I should warn you that Dr Ruddock has a long-promised books [sic] on Columbus and the Cabots on the stocks, but she definitely did not have the butlerage entry and her new materials, to which we look forward, is I think mainly from Italian MS sources.'

27 November 1481

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Condon to D.B. Quinn (handwritten)

'Please excuse a brief manuscript note –

just to say have started to explore Cabot's pension.

Your 89 & 91 are parts of one & the same entry, continuing from 89...during the pleasure of the said [?]late King (etc.)

[90] Roll of 2nd year = Pipe roll E372/356 – Cabot is charged with a debt of £25 (instalments of his annuity from Annum. 21 hen VII – Annum. 23 hen VII). A marginal note and his exoneration of £24.13.4 in Roll of anno 4 – will investigate further as time permits.'¹⁰

27 November - 15 December 1981 (undated, but must be between these dates)

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

Condon (P.R.O.) to D.B. Quinn (handwritten)

'I fear I have been bombarding you

with letters, but...do you know the enclosed? Again, the evidence has been lurking in my notes for years, without my doing anything about it. I can't get any further than

1498 x1500 on the dating clause, since H VII (wretched man) was at Greenwich in March 3 years running! Whether there is anything in Chancery files I don't know – at least, I haven't yet checked. But you may think it worth a joint note in Mariner's Mirror, if it isn't well known – it gives a suitable 'flavour' of uncertainty! If you think it is worth doing, then will [?]hunt around.'

[This is followed by a transcription of a previously unknown letter from Henry VII to his Lord Chancellor, which refers to a forthcoming voyage of discovery to the 'new founde lande' by William Weston of Bristol. The letter itself is discussed in: 'Henry VII and the Bristol expeditions to North America: the Condon documents'.]

¹⁰ This is a new find, which Quinn refers to in his draft paper 'Sebastian Cabot, 1968-1992', p. 4, LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7. Ruddock acknowledges this as a new find in her letter of 22 March 1992, p. 4 (see below).

15 December 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

D.B. Quinn to Condon

'This is a great find and as usual sends one crazy because it is incomplete. You will see that John Esterfield is an active merchant in the French, Spanish and Portuguese trades, 1465-80; and that William Weston comes in as the pioneer trader, so far as we know from Bristol direct to Madeira but using a Breton ship.'

'This clearly indicates that William Weston is being sent by the king to 'pass and sail for to search and find if he can the new founde lande' and styaing [sic] process until his return.'

After various discussion, suggests: 'A date of 1499 or 1500 would therefore be plausible.

If you can find anything in Chancery it would tie it up, though I know how often Chancery documents lack dates also.'

I think that with the 1502 material you have every encouragement to publish, but if you will continue your search it would be very helpful to do more than a note. Together the two new documents that you have found add up to some revision of Henry VII's concern with the svoyages [sic] to the west. If you liked I would sketch out a framework for a short article for you. But let us see what you can find further first of all as it would be embarrassing if there is more and then you had to return to the question. And if I wish you continued with Sebastian C. If you could get something which tied him in with the crown then the chain of connection between H VII and the voyagers would be a really long one.

Congratulation on the discovery of the signet letters as for the earlier finds. Though I did report the earlier one to Dr Ruddock she would only use it in her book which is still a long way ahead. I do not think that holding back for a little time would be detrimental.'

c.15-31 December 1981

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

'DBQ Not published 1981'

'Henry VII and the Western Atlantic Voyages: Some Additional Information'

This is apparently the draft 'framework' that Quinn proposed writing for Condon on 15 December.

16 March 1982

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 165 Folder 9

D.B. Quinn (writing from the USA) to Miss Condon

'I must apologise for my failure to answer your last letter, written shortly before we left England on January 11.'

'I hope you have had time for some further searches and for more discoveries – though the latter are so much a matter of chance. When you have got to the stage that you have put together some sort of matrix for the documents already found, possibly using part of the draft I sent you, I will be very glad to see it. Whether or not I shall be in London in August or still over here remains uncertain. But I wish you well in your searches, more particularly in regard to the signet warrant of 13 March which on reflection appears to be much the most significant find since Dr Ruddock's revelations in 1974.'

10 August 1985

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 42 Folder 8

D.B. Quinn to Miss Condon

'I was hoping to see you in London but it was unfortunate that it was a week, early in July, when you were away.'

I have not done any more research on the material you found and so helpfully passed on to me in 1981. It is only within the last nine months or so that I have really settled back into my home and still more recently that I pulled out the file I had there on the new material you found and its integration into the supposed story of the English voyages. I have written this up in a form which you may wish to keep off the map the map [sic] or in which which [sic] you would prefer some more direct collaboration. The presen [sic] form in fact gives mre [sic] more chance to speculate than you might wish to be involved in. However, to be suitable for the Mariner's Mirror it would need to have all the documents printed in full and this you are more likely to be able to do since I may not be in London before late October. I take it from your silence that nothing further has turned up in your own searches.

One reason I held back because I hoped against hope that Alwyn Ruddock would at last get out her book on Columbus and Cabot, but there is no sign of it after another four years so I do not feel any compunction about publishing in what she regards as her area.

I shall be very glad to hear your reactions to the paper and any suggestions for extending and improving it. The MM would, I am sure, print it.'

14 November 1986

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 43 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

The letter discusses earlier correspondence and her plans for the 'writing up of John Cabot for a wider audience.'

'I shall go over

the 1498 voyage very carefully to make sure it conforms with the DBQ rules.

This was the most difficult chapter. By the way, John Cabot came back to Bristol after all. He only came home to die, but he made it. So much for Polydore and the Vatican sources.'¹¹

'I will think long and hard about the idea of a Hakluyt Society volume. I thought of Bristol Record Society because a lot of the documents concern the Bristol folk who supported the Cabot voyages and people with Bristol links such as John Day. (Yes he was Hugh Say quite definitely, from a writ in the Exchequer, you Doubting Thomas). Some of them might seem a bit parish pump material to Hakluyt readers. But I will think about the documents again after this present toil is off my hands. I am dismayed how many technical things there are, such as Papal Bulls and bits of Exchequer procedure etc. to be explained for the non-specialist. They take up so many words. This mythical 'general reader' peering over one's shoulder is a blasted nuisance sometimes, don't you agree? It will be a change to get back to a more familiar type of writing. Well, 1992 is still a long way away. I'll do my best to make it.'

8 February 1988

LoC D.B. Quinn Papers, Box 71 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

'I was very glad to have your reference in Scritti Colombiani. It is difficult to keep up with current publications now my time in London is so limited. I had not seen this title. I have written for it, but it has not yet arrived, so I cannot tell you what it

¹¹ This is a reference to Polydore Vergil's suggestion, found in a Vatican manuscript of 1512-13, that Cabot was lost at sea: J. A. Williamson, *The Cabot Voyages and Bristol Discovery under Henry VII* (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, No. 120, CUP, 1962), pp. 224-5.

contains. Domencico Giuffr  found a John Day in a tax account in Genoa once but I have never managed to tie him up with our John Day. This article may do so.'

'I enjoyed the Frescobaldi assignment but I shall not join in their plans for Columbus.¹² BBC work takes up a lot of time and it is difficult to keep up to schedule living in Midhurst. The distance is not far but I have never learned to drive and travelling from here is getting difficult, especially in winter. The local car-hire service is not very dependable. I think my best policy will be to give whatever time I can get in London to finishing Cabot rather than start a new project now.

Cabot had a bad set-back this winter. In fact, I am very lucky not to have lost him altogether. I had a good summer, with some time in Oxford working in the Bodleian on medieval ecclesiastical history to prep up the background on the missionaries who sailed with John Cabot in Cabot in 1498. This was much off my usual beat, but I got a good lead on Carbonaro in Italy and Oxford is much better than the BM for such a subject.'

Discusses how the 'little hurricane' in October disrupted her research, damaged her property and almost wrecked her house.

The letter suggests that she had 'reached an impasse with her agent at Curtis Brown. Columbus, Cabot and the English Discovery of America covers a lot of ground and looks like finishing around 150,000 words + notes, bibliography and acknowledgements, with about twenty illustrations.' The agent thinks this too long.

'I know I have a good book in the making. It is not simply a life of Cabot. It has a good plan for backbone and a great deal of new material including the first letter from England reporting the 1497 discovery to Italy. But it needs space if it is to be acceptable to historians as well as the non-specialist reader.'

'I must in all honesty tell you right now that I have done my best to scuttle your secret fishing voyages. I am sorry, but no one could write about Cabot today without dealing with them. They have become so much part of history. I take the line that the Bristol discovery was pre-1470 but lost again until Cabot made landfall in 1497. So I have hesitated about writing to you earlier about this.'

10 February 1988

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 71 Folder 7

D.B. Quinn to Ruddock

'I am concerned about your book. Of course it should be 150,000 words long if you wish to develop it fully.'

'I am naturally excited that you have so much that is new and I would like to see it out fairly soon (say 1990 rather than 1992 as the flood will be on then, and half the world will have books on Columbus on the shelves – one U.S. series is in 12 volumes; one Italian series about the same, scores of one volume works. Yours may well be the most original among them.

You have, I think, been under the illusion that I regard my own view of the earliest English voyages as dogma: it is not. It is an argument supported by logic though not convincing documentation along the line. If your views are well supported by document and argument I will be only too glad to accept them, though you must accept the likelihood of controversy - but that is part of the game one is in where the sources are so imperfect.'

¹² This is a reference to Alwyn Ruddock's work as a researcher for a programme on a BBC television series about the European aristocracy, which included a programme / chapter about the Florentine family, the Frescobaldi: Robert Lacey, *Aristocrats* (BBC, 1983, Fontana ed. 1994).

5 April 1988

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 71 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn (handwritten)

'The John Day article

has arrived – last Wednesday. It is in Taviani's Festschrift not in the Scritti Colombiani. Either the bibliographer in America knew no Italian & simply joined up the first & last words of the title or the printer of the Columbus news letter missed out a line or two. No wonder it took time to run to earth.'

Discusses Quinn's planned visit to Genoa and troubles he's had getting colour photographs of maps.

'I do like maps. I have the happiest recollections of holidays in Italy exploring hill towns & other odd places in search of reported maps or charts that might have been useful.'

16 April 1989

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 71 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

Discusses various attempts to find a publisher.

'I sent Macmillans a very long synopsis of the whole book last spring. They kept it for three months to get an expert opinion on it, I suppose. Were you by any chance the expert consulted?'

Tries to find out if he knows of others working on Cabot.

19 January 1992

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 46 Folder 8

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

'All my new documents of any importance relate to the Cabots and their associates in London and Italy.

The nearest my new discovery comes to Columbus are those relating to John Day and throwing light on various points in the John Day letter. The identification of John Day with Hugh Say of Bristol and London is clinched by documents from another lawsuit, incomplete of course, but bringing in another witness to his identification. This time it is a Londoner, a neighbour in Thames Street and an alderman of the City. A treasonable affair involving members of his family seems to have been the probable cause of his change of name and appearance at Bristol. He became Hugh Say again in Bristol before returning to London as soon as it was safe to do so. I have found a lot of less important stuff relating to his family and associates in Bristol but nothing new on his connection with Columbus.'

Notes her plans to write a book just on John Cabot's voyages.

'Under my new

scheme Day's life and family and his associates in Bristol will make a good chapter to show his value as a witness of events in Bristol in the book on the early discovery.'

'You will appreciate that I have been working on this topic intermittently for a long time and I need to check everything, especially in P.R.O. lists and bundles. There has been a lot of rearrangement and classifying of boxes of documents quite unsorted and unlisted years ago when I was working from Osterley.'

She talks about her visit to Dubrovnik.

'I made some good friends

there when I went to Dubrovnik to search for Sebastian Cabot's friend and

mouthpiece to the Venetian Senate, Hieronimo de Marin of Ragusa. I had a depressing letter from Veško Kostić and his wife from Belgrade (he is a professor in the university there) but we know nothing about those in Dubrovnik. Neither his letter nor mine probably got through, I suppose. I saw the wreckage of the archivist's house and others on the hill outside the city on TV. I suppose they will now be sleeping in the cellars under the archives in the former Bishop's Palace.'

9 February 1992

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 46, Folder 8

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

Discusses, Ian Wilson's book, *The Columbus Myth* (1991).

'Knowing his previous

contacts in the Vatican I was a little worried in case he got on to the missionary friars in the 1498 voyage or Cabot's Italian backers in London. I was relieved to see there is absolutely no original research there, in spite of his parade of work in the archives in the PRO and elsewhere. Nor has he read all the works in his bibliography, of course.'

Notes various criticisms of Wilson's work. 'When

solid facts are missing, the gaps are filled and the story embellished by imagination. So it is with Wilson. For instance, 'Cabot's Mysterious Disappearance' is sheer nonsense. The only mystery is why a good historian like Williamson did not find out that John Cabot came back from his 1498 voyage and died in England in 1500. Hojeda is much maligned in the Columbus Myth to make a good 'climax' at Coquibacão.'

'Finding this sort of thing in The Columbus Myth makes me wish now that I had written and submitted that article to the William and Mary Quarterly in spite of the warning of a possible rejection. If it had been published it would have made clear that I had no part in this Double-agent affair. I have done an enormous number of wills of both London and Bristol merchants and have some nice stuff showing Day's family background connections with a family of leading Iceland traders in Bristol and his marriage to a niece of one of the chief merchants of Bristol concerned with the Cabots and Atlantic exploration. This would explain Day's knowledge of Inventio Fortunatae, just as the indictment of his father or brother for treason and the Say family attachment to the White Rose probably explains his move to Bristol under an alias and the fear he shows in putting anything in his letter to Columbus treasonable to Henry VII. It would have made quite a nice article but I suppose Day really belongs more to a book on Bristol and the Cabots than a Columbus memorial volume in USA.'

Notes that compared to Wilson:

'My own approach to Bristol and to Cabot's part in their voyages is quite different. I am not just adding new documents to Williamson's account but approaching Cabot from a new angle.

'You will remember, perhaps, that I worked for years on a book on the first English ships and merchants in the Mediterranean trade, after I had published Italian Merchants and Shipping. This involved a lot of digging in the records in Italian ports, Malta, Dubrovnik etc where the English ships put in and there were English agents. Richard Hakluyt lamented the loss of all the ledger books of the English involved so I went after the account books and letters of their Italian associates in the Italian colonies in London and Southampton and the records of Italian notaries in those ports where I had leads from the HAC [sic]¹³ records in the PRO. I found the Cabots only

¹³ HCA: High Court of Admiralty.

by chance but trying to get through all the research aboard for the English merchants under Birkbeck limitations was a constant frustration. Eventually the Cabots took over. If I manage to get this finished for 1996 I will add a new European dimension to the Cabot story from the Italians in England - John's backers in the Italian colony in London, the Italian missionaries in the 1498 voyage, and so on. So my Italian background will not have been entirely wasted academically. Reading up all the background of the Atlantic explorations took endless time and the missionaries gave me a lot of trouble. I did not know any Italian ecclesiastical history or Italian sources for it.'

'This reminds me I have not yet answered your question about the Columbus sources fully. I have found no new documents on Columbus myself, as I said, although I dug quite deeply in the commercial records of his period in England. I have done all the customs records of London, Sandwich, Southampton and Bristol for 1470-1550 but found no mention of him, although I was very alert looking for him in 1476-78 especially. I was not surprised. He was only a merchant's factor then and Italians' goods were usually listed in the name of the firm or owner, not the agent. The HCA records do not start so early and I found nothing in all the Chancery court cases or the unlisted Exchequer bundles and rolls in the PRO. I found nothing on him in Italian archives. Genoa was not very profitable for me. No account books from Genoese firms in England in my years and I had no leads to any Genoese notaries. Their books are legion. I am sure, if there was any new Columbus or Cabot stuff there it would have been discovered by this time.'

Notes of the work in Genoa that 'Archivists, who are on the spot, year after year, are the people most likely to come across new things in Genoa and they have been very good here in the past. I have got far more from archivists than from historians in Italy.'

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7

Ruddock to D.B. Quinn

'I fear you will be vexed but it would be impossible for us to rewrite your Sebastian pamphlet together for the Bristol series as you suggest. Miss Ralph suggested years ago that I should write one of these pamphlets on John Cabot but already I had far too much new material to be compressed into such a small space. I know that you have no idea of the amount of ground I have covered on the Bristol voyages and the Cabots over all the years in London. I have not just found a few new documents or mentions by lucky dip tactics as Newton did, or by following up leads from other people's publications. I have been systematically through a hell of a lot of MSS sources covering 1480 - 1512 so that I have both positive and negative evidence of what is to be found there. This includes all the relevant customs and memoranda rolls, page by page because the Repertory rolls are so very incomplete, with a number of other Exchequer and Chancery series. I have also done a lot of unsorted and unlisted exchequer bundles and files, such as the Exchequer bille [sic] - filthy things when I had them brought up to Chancery lane.'

'All this has turned the Bristol/Cabot story upside down and given quite a new appraisal of the relative achievements of Sebastian and John. Perhaps 'new' is not the right word to use here. I have worked myself back to the assessment of the two Cabots, father and son, made by contemporary Bristol people. Sebastian was Bristol's hero, not John, and my findings are all in agreement with this Tudor line of thought. So this is the line I am taking, although it is quite different from all the historians who have written on the Cabots in the last hundred years. Perhaps contemporaries were in a better position than Henry Harris to pass judgement on the two men, don't you agree?

So I turn the story of the early Bristol voyages upside down.'

p.3

'I did not say John Cabot died in Bristol but in England. I made a special effort to try and find out where he was buried, for several reasons. I had no success. He might equally have died in the London friary as in Bristol. This friary business is difficult. Even in Rome, a crucial volume of records is missing at this time from the archives of the order.

The document Miss Condon has found does not show Henry VII trying to find some other men in Bristol to make a further expedition after John Cabot's last voyage ended in failure, as you say in your draft. William Weston (not John Weston) was a leading figure supporting John Cabot's 1498 voyage. The document is not dated but it must belong to the months immediately before the departure of the 1498 voyage. Weston, like John Cabot, returned from this voyage. He is an interesting figure but seems to have been broken financially and died not long afterwards.'

About John Esterfield. It would be wise to cut out the word 'veteran' when describing him. Like the Jay family in Bristol, the Esterfields had the habit of duplicating the same Christian names in the family (a deplorable habit from our point of view). You have at least four men all named John Esterfield in Bristol in the last two decades of the fifteenth century. At least two of them and possibly three were much involved in John Cabot's affairs. I cannot say with any certainty which of them is named in this document with Weston.

Surely sending Weston and Esterfield to Terceira and linking them with the Azoreans in Bristol is sheer guesswork based on no evidence at all? I have found nothing to show these two supporters of John Cabot linked up with the Azoreans. They are not mentioned in the 1501 grant to the Azoreans and three other Bristol men. I believe Williamson was correct to represent this as a grant to a new and perhaps rival venture in Bristol. They certainly showed some evidence of hostility towards Sebastian Cabot.

The 1502 grant gets a lot of space in your draft as if it was a new discovery. Surely this is the grant (including permission to colonise) that is printed by Rymer in Foedera and later by Biggar and Williamson? Would it not be better, for the purpose of this additional note, to give more space to Miss Condon's findings (if she is agreeable) which have not yet appeared in print? Williamson has most of the documents mentioned on your page 2 but Miss Condon's is quite new.

When you are dealing with my note on the 1505 Sebastian grant in the Bulletin please make the point that for the first time it shows he made not only one but at least two separate voyages of exploration under the English flag in the reign of Henry VII. Suggested by Winship years ago, this at last becomes a fact.'

'You really must cut out the sentence about "Sebastian Cabot sneaking away from Bristol early in 1506". This is pure guesswork, based only on the fact that you know he did not collect his pension there from the customs officials for two years. Sneaking away from Bristol will look rather silly when all is told.'

p.4

Ruddock is very critical of page 4 and 5 of Quinn's draft.

'There is nothing new in the last two pages of your draft apart from the non-collection of Sebastian's annuity for two years which you and Alison found and the entry on the Pipe Roll found by Miss Condon ordering him to pay

back £25 of his annuity.¹⁴ That is all the new discoveries since you wrote in 1968. To say "Presumably because he was not available for royal service" is guesswork and not correct. Moreover, all you write about Venetian financial backing cannot possibly have any basis in any of the records in England you have looked at. All of these last two pages are pure guesswork and imagination built around the two new entries about the annuity in the PRO.¹⁵

'I would need to rewrite your last two pages to put Sebastian right but I am sorry I am not going to tell you at present what really happened. Please be understanding. I am reluctant, as you would be, to publish all my new version in outline in a short note bringing up to date a Bristol pamphlet written by another scholar. I must publish in fully myself before other folk begin using documents I have found, to prove or disprove God knows what.'

'Why don't you reprint the 1968 pamphlet with a straightforward, chronological account of the new findings since 1968 without all the guesswork and speculation? This would be most useful and could reach the number of words you want if you expanded details of your findings in the PRO and Miss Condon's and anything you please from my Bulletin note and document.'

4 April 1992

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7

Quinn to Ruddock

'Thank you very much for responding so fully to my attempt to put something together on Sebastian Cabot, additional to what was published in 1968 – the work I may say of a day and half on the typewriter! I'm not surprised at your responses as it is clear that we on a different level of research on this area. But it [is] rather difficult for anyone else in the field to make progress until you have produced your documents – and I think your faithful [sic] following of every possible lead is a work of great importance and of great credit to you. At the same time I turned up recently a letter of yours of 1965 in which you said confidently that the documents and their context were almost complete and you expected to produce them very soon [sic]. That is 27 years ago. It seems a pity you did not produce the volume for the Hakluyt Society which appeared on their lists of works in progress [sic] for so many years or get the documents into the British Academy's records of social and economic history series. This would leave [sic] you free to produce the book on the Cabots in your own time. However, I do hope to live to see one or both of the volumes before I die. The danger is that you might die also without publishing (as Norah Evans did with her work on Hooker that she sat on for so long and never lived to see published – though an American published a book on part of it only a few years after her death. At one time I think you took a dislike to me fostered by her and got the impression that I was waiting to seize on your work and exploit it myself. I hope that is not true as my concern is to learn what happened in that very obscure area of early English enterprise, not who produced it.

While I reserve the right to make as many guesses as amuse me for myself I do not feel I can go ahead with the 2000 words asked for in the circumstances. The only thing I can think of is for you to get the permission of the Insutitute [sic] to have your 1974 article reoublished [sic] under your name as the addition asked for. It is about the right length and will come as genuine addition to the 1968 material. Certainly Pat McGrath did not know of it when he produced a rathr [sic] spetchy [sic] account of the Bristol volges [sic] for the Festschrift published for me in

¹⁴ See letter of 27 November 1981 (above) and the connected note.

¹⁵ Quinn presumably mentioned 'Venetian' financial backing in his draft because he knew from Ruddock that this was where the bankers were from. See letter: 1 May 1992

1978, which was very bad of him.'

22 April 1992

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7

Quinn to Condon

'Since I saw y[o]u I have been in contact with Dr Ruddock and it seems clear that she has so much extra material on the Cabots, notably John, that it would be unwise for me to go so far in speculation as I do in the [sic] draft I send [sic] to you sometime ago. She has agreed that I can reprint her 1974 article as the core of my contribution, which is very satisfactory. I would be satisfied to do this alone, but she feels that it might be wise to say something about your find about the signet letter of 1498, 1499 or whatever. Her own view is that it belongs to 1498 and is associated with the king's attempt to drum up support for the xabot [sic] voyage that year.'

'I was glad to hear from you personally that you were still intested [sic] in the sibject [sic] when we met, after many years, at the Brian Harley meeting.'

1 May 1992

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7

Ruddock to Quinn

'Many thanks for your letter. My Note and Document on Sebastian was published in the Bulletin not in the Mariners' Mirror. When your letter arrived I wrote to the editor and have just got his reply with permission to reprint.'

'It is quite true that I jibbed, as you say, at making a complete translation of all of my documents in 1965. I remember the problem very well, But I am afraid Skelton's Italian would have been little use in solving it. The difficulty was the medieval Venetian dialect which was very different from the vernacular of Dante or the Medici. Even Raymond and Florence de Roover could give little help with it. Florence had published a Glossary of Medieval Italian Terms of Business but the words and phrases were all from Tuscany, mostly Florence. There was nothing like this in print for medieval Venetian commerce at that time. Bassani and Georgetti, both lecturing in Italian at Birkbeck, were useless when confronted by a microfilm and my transcripts and knew no Venetian expert in London or elsewhere. Renaissance Florence was occupying everyone at that time. Warwick only got round to Venice much later, of course. Archivists in Venice found my persistent questions irritating and often unanswerable. I did much better in Yugoslavia some years later. Professor Tadić if I remember rightly, was born in Dubrovnik. He was an economic historian and had worked a lot in Dubrovnik archives in the period of the Venetian domination there. So he was able to fill in a few gaps. Scholars such as Rubinstein and Denys Hay, accustomed to scholarly Renaissance handwriting in the language of Dante and Plutarch, have no idea of the difficulties dealing with medieval mercantile documents in Italy and Sicily. The De Roovers understood, from their own difficulties with the Medici banking records, naturally.'

1 February 1993

LoC Quinn Papers, Box 158 Folder 7

Ruddock to Quinn

Discusses past problems with finding a commercial press that was willing to publish her book with the supporting appendices.

'To cut a long story short,

The University of Exeter Press will publish a book well in advance of the Cabot year.'

'I did not hear definitely from Exeter until last week.

Did they send my plan of chapters and additional notes to you for an opinion? Someone seems to have been very enthusiastic about it – probably you? Presses never tell, of course, but if I have guessed right I am very grateful for your support.'¹⁶

'I was very surprised and pleased to read the article from Romania you sent to me before Christmas. This Spanish version of the Isle of Brasil is quite new to me and will be valuable too. The discovery was already reported and put on record in Italy before 1470 so the evidence from both Spain and Italy support each other convincingly, don't you agree?'

¹⁶ Quinn was, in fact, the reviewer of Ruddock's book proposal.